

Preface to the 15th Edition - Revised

Introduction to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule

The Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, Annotated for Statistical Reporting Purposes (2003) ("HTS"), is published by the U. S. International Trade Commission pursuant to section 1207 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-418; 19 U.S.C. 3007).¹ The publication contains the legal text of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule, as amended and modified, together with statistical annotations established pursuant to section 484(f) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1484(f)). Legal instruments and administrative actions affecting the 2003 edition of the HTS are set forth below in the section entitled "Changes in the Current Edition." Information about statistical annotations is in the final section of the preface.

The legal text of the HTS includes all provisions enacted by Congress or proclaimed by the President. These legal provisions are the General Rules of Interpretation (GRIs); Additional U.S. Rules of Interpretation; General Notes; Chapters 1 through 99 (organized into Sections I through XXII), Section and Chapter notes, headings and subheadings through the 8-digit level (with their numbers, article descriptions, tariff rates and special tariff programs); Chemical Appendix; Pharmaceutical Appendix; and Intermediate Chemicals for Dyes Appendix. The classification of goods and interpretation of the HTS are the responsibility of the U.S. Customs Service.

The GRIs, 4- and 6-digit nomenclature categories, and associated notes (not including Additional U.S. Notes) in Chapters 1 through 97 reflect the international nomenclature structure of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, pursuant to a convention administered by the World Customs Organization (WCO). Pursuant to this convention, which became effective for the United States as of January 1, 1989, the international nomenclature--and thus the provisions reflected in the HTS--is modified when the WCO makes changes in the text or in the classification of goods at the 4- or 6-digit level. The international nomenclature categories may be subdivided at the 8-digit U.S. rate line level to provide particular rates of duty or to make classification distinctions of U.S. interest. All rates of duty in the HTS are established by U.S. legal action. Pursuant to the 1988 trade act, changes in the international nomenclature structure are periodically reflected in the HTS by proclamation, the most recent of which became effective on January 10, 2002 (Pres. Proc. 7515 of Dec. 18, 2001), following a USITC investigation under section 1205 of that act. For information on all investigations under section 1205, consult the USITC publications list, available at the web site (www.usitc.gov).

¹ Section 1207(a) of the Act provides that "[t]he Commission shall compile and publish, at appropriate intervals, and keep up to date the Harmonized Tariff Schedule and related information in the form of printed copy....". Section 1207(b) of the Act provides that the published copy of the HTS "shall contain--(1) the then current Harmonized Tariff Schedule; (2) statistical annotations and related statistical information formulated under section 484(f) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1484(f)); and (3) such other matters as the Commission considers to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes enumerated in the Preamble to the Harmonized System convention." Parties attempting to classify goods or to ascertain rates of duty should be careful to consult the HTS, rather than the on-line trade databweb or interactive tariff database presented at the USITC's Internet site. The latter do not contain legal rules, notes or complete product descriptions, and it may be difficult to determine if provisions of chapter 98 or 99 apply to particular shipments.

The HTS also contains nonlegal statistical elements—namely, the annotations, notes, suffixes, units of quantity and other matters formulated under section 484(f) of the Tariff Act of 1930. Last, such elements as the Table of Contents, footnotes, Schedule C, Schedule D, alphabetical index, and Change Record are inserted for ease of reference only. The presence or absence of a footnote and the language contained in footnotes have no effect on the legal text or its interpretation, and users are encouraged to consult the Preface, the Change Record and Chapters 98 and 99 to locate any provisions that may apply to specific goods. Procedures for requesting changes in statistical provisions of the HTS are set forth below.

Electronic Revisions to the Printed HTS

The on-line electronic revisions to the printed HTS and supplements are posted to the Commission's Internet site www.usitc.gov periodically as legal or statistical actions are made effective, along with links to published documents that may make changes after the last posted revision. The entire schedule is posted for each revision, even if no changes were made in some chapters. The Change Record for such a revision should be read in conjunction with the Preface's list of legal or statistical bases for the changes in the revision. While each Change Record in a printed annual edition or supplement contains all changes since the last printed document, the Change Record for each revision relates only to that revision. Printed editions of the HTS since its enactment have included the following publications: first (1989)—annual publication, 4 supplements; second (1990)—annual, 2 supps.; third (1991)—annual, 1 supp.; fourth (1992)—annual, 1 supp.; fifth (1993)—annual, 1 supp.; sixth (1994)—annual, 2 supps.; seventh (1995)—annual, 1 supp.; eighth (1996)—annual, 1 supp.; ninth (1997)—annual, 1 supp.; tenth (1998)—annual, 1 supp.; eleventh (1999)—annual, 1 supp.; twelfth (2000)—annual, 1 one supp.; thirteenth (2001)—annual, 1 one supp.; and fourteenth (2002)—annual only (no supp.).

Changes in the Current Revised Edition

The principal changes in this revision of the 2003 basic edition reflect the following instruments and actions:

- (1). Presidential Proclamation 7637 of January 10, 2003, To Modify Duty-Free Treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences: Chile is removed from treatment for a particular product, effective February 13, 2003 and Afghanistan is designated as a least developed beneficiary country, effective March 15, 2003;
- (2). Presidential Proclamation 7657 of April 2, 2003, To Take Certain Actions Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act With Respect to the Republic of The Gambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo: Gamble is designated as an eligible sub-Saharan African country and as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country, effective April 2, 2003;
- (3). Office of the United States Trade Representative Notice of December 31, 2002, Technical Corrections to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, effective January 1, 1995;
- (4). Office of the United States Trade Representative Notice of February 11, 2003, Technical Corrections to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, effective July 12, 2002;

- (5). Office of the United States Trade Representative Notice of March 4, 2003; Determinations Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Rwanda is eligible for textile and apparel benefits provided under the AGOA effective March 4, 2003;
- (6). Office of the United States Trade Representative Notice of March 31, 2003: Exclusion of Particular Products From Actions Under Section 203 of the Trade Act of 1974 With Regard to Certain Steel Products; Conforming Changes and Technical Corrections to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, effective March 20, 2003.
- (7). Office of the United States Trade Representative Notice of April 15, 2003: Technical Corrections to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, with various effective dates.
- (8). Corrections of typographical errors in the basic edition.

Statistical Reporting Under the HTS²

The statistical annotations contained in the HTS prescribe the statistical information to be supplied on customs entry and withdrawal forms or electronic filings with respect to articles imported into the customs territory of the United States. Thus, this publication is designed to enable importers, customs brokers, Customs officers and other interested persons to determine both (1) the classification of and rates of duty applicable to imported articles, and (2) the requirements for reporting statistical data with respect to such imports. In addition, except as specified in the Notice to Exporters, this publication may also be used in place of the reporting codes of Schedule B for reporting exports on the Shipper's Export Declaration or under the program for electronic reporting of exports. The regulations and procedures of the U.S. Customs Service and the Bureau of Census should also be consulted to ensure correct reporting and compliance with all requirements of those agencies.

Requests from interested parties or their representatives for changes in any of the requirements for statistical reporting must be directed to the Committee for Statistical Annotation of Tariff Schedules. Such requests should be submitted no later than April 1 for changes to be effective July 1, and no later than August 1 for changes to be effective January 1. Parties should specify whether the proposed change relates only to exports for purposes of Schedule B. These requests should be submitted to:

The Chairman
Committee for Statistical Annotation of Tariff Schedules
United States International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW.

²Sec. 484(f) reads as follows:

"(f) Statistical Enumeration.--The Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, and the United States International Trade Commission are authorized and directed to establish from time to time for statistical purposes an enumeration of articles in such detail as in their judgment may be necessary, comprehending all merchandise imported into the United States and exported from the United States, and shall seek, in conjunction with statistical programs for domestic production and programs for achieving international harmonization of trade statistics, to establish the comparability thereof with such enumeration of articles. All import entries and export declarations shall include or have attached thereto an accurate statement specifying, in terms of such detailed enumeration, the kinds and quantities of all merchandise imported and exported and the value of the total quantity of each kind of article."

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Washington, D.C. 20436

Such requests should indicate precisely the nature of each desired change, the proposed language sought to be inserted or precise language to be modified or deleted (including units of quantity to be affected), and detailed reasons in support of the requests. Confidential business information should not be submitted to the Committee. For requests relating to the HTS, the requestor should provide the names of importers and foreign manufacturers (when known) and indicate the countries from which the commodities are being imported. In general, a statistical category under which 3 or fewer importers or exporters would likely report shipments will not be approved in the form requested, in order to avoid the disclosure of confidential business information.

Questions regarding the drafting or treatment of such requests should be addressed to the Committee, either by mail to the Chairman or by phone to (202) 205-2592. Private sector requests for the creation, modification or deletion of statistical categories can be submitted by mail or can be filed electronically using EDIS (the Electronic Document Inspection System), as explained at the USITC Internet site. Requests from filers outside the U.S. Government will be available for inspection on the USITC Internet site. Comments on such requests should be filed by mail to the Chairman not later than 2 weeks after the pertinent Committee deadline (not later than April 15 or August 15). Copies of documents submitted to the Committee and of the Committee's minutes are available from the Office of the Secretary, USITC, and should be requested under the terms and procedures of the Freedom of Information Act.